1: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924)1948
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ened by the age-long power of his ancestor. Finally, in old age a powerful chief is careless where he seats himself; his fame is so great that he can afford to disregard all conventions.

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POWER OF CHIEFS

It will be seen from the foregoing that chieftainship among the Bella Coola does not depend on hereditary rank, still less on an elective principle, but on the individual's prestige as displayed, especially in his ability to acquire for himself a firm seat by the giving of presents. As he continues to do so his influence becomes ever greater. Consequently, it is impossible to state clearly what are the powers of a chief; such depend upon his prestige and influence. For a Bella Coola chief has no executive or judicial authority; what deference is shown to him depends on his success as a man, a factor which is constantly rising or falling.

The coming of the white man has enabled the Bella Coola to earn comparatively large sums of money by trapping and fishing. This in turn has enabled nearly everyone to give at least one potlatch, a very different state of affairs from that which prevailed in the last century when it required years of toil for a man to amass the necessary food and skins. Consequently, in many towns there were no men who had given potlatches, so that a man's prestige was estimated by the presents he had given at smaller ceremonies. Sometimes, moreover, a man preferred to increase his fame by giving rites of a different nature, such as *kusiut* dances, and the presents then distributed might elevate him in the eyes of the community, to a position above that of a man who had given a potlatch. This, however, was unusual.

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After a fourth potlatch a man is accorded a position of eminence, and is termed a *numitl* chief. *Numitl* is an untranslatable word, with the significance of "passage," an allusion to the amount of goods which have passed through his hands. Jealous and vulgar-minded persons pun on the word, applying

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